

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7804

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

SECDEF

CINCPAC

JCS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16860

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, MARR, MOPS, TH, UK, XO, US

SUBJ: OBSERVATION TRIP TO DIEGO GARCIA

REF: A. STATE 228592

B. LONDON 13648 (NOTAL)

1. WE NOTE THAT CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE CONTAINED REFTEL (A) DOES NOT DEAL WITH CHATCHAI VISIT ITSELF. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THAT GUIDANCE IS INTENDED TO BE USABLE FOR GENERAL PURPOSES, WE SHOULD ALSO BE PREPARED FOR QUESTIONS ON CHATCHAI VISIT IF IT TAKES PLACE. WE PROPOSE SOMETHING ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

2. Q: WHY IS THAI DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI VISITING DIEGO GARCIA?

A: US AIRCRAFT CARRYING SUPPLIES TO DIEGO GARCIA STAGE THROUGH THAILAND. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN VISITING US
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ACTIVITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA, AND WE WERE HAPPY

TO INVITE HIM TO SEE THEM.

3. Q: DIDN'T THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND RECENTLY
PUT SOME KIND OF RESTRICTION ON FLIGHTS FROM THAT
COUNTRY TO DIEGO GARCIA?

A: THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT IN JULY OF THIS YEAR EXPRESSED
THE WISH THAT US FLIGHTS FROM THAILAND TO DIEGO GARCIA NOT
CARRY OUT SURVEILLANCE EN ROUTE. WE ARE COMPLYING WITH THE
ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT'S WISHES.

4. Q: WHAT IS CARRIED BY US AIRCRAFT STAGING TO
DIEGO GARCIA FROM THAILAND?

A: THEY CARRY FOOD AND ORDINARY SUPPLIES.

5. WE DO NOT BELIEVE CHATCHAI VISIT TO DIEGO GARCIA
IS AS FIRM AS IMPLIED BY REFTEL (A), FOR SEVERAL
REASONS: A) CHATCHAI HAS JUST LEFT FOR EXTENDED TRIP
TO MIDDLE EAST AND EASTERN EUROPE AND WILL NOT RETURN
UNTIL ABOUT NOVEMBER 17. BY TIME HE RETURNS, THAI
NATIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN WILL BE IN FULL SWING, AND
CHATCHAI IS VERY MUCH INVOLVED. THERE IS SOME TALK
HERE TO EFFECT THAT HE WILL RESIGN AS DEPUTY FOREIGN
MINISTER FAIRLY SOON, IN WHICH CASE QUESTION OF VISIT
BY HIM TO DIEGO GARCIA WOULD DISAPPEAR; B) BRITISH APPARENTLY
WANT SOMETHING BORDERING ON ASSURANCES IN ADVANCE THAT CHATCHAI
WILL REFRAIN FROM PUBLICITY CONCERNING VISIT. IT IS DOUBTFUL
SUCH ASSURANCES CAN BE OBTAINED AND EVEN MORE DOUBTFUL
THAT, IF OBTAINED, THEY WOULD BE HONORED. UNDER
CIRCUMSTANCES, CANNOT, PERHAPS, BE ENTIRELY RULED OUT
THAT HMG WILL VETO VISIT.

6. IN VIEW OF ABOVE, WE RECOMMEND THAT CHATCHAI
DIEGO GARCIA VISIT BE REGARDED ONLY AS POSSIBILITY,
RATHER THAN CERTAINTY. BELIEVE WE SHOULD GO AHEAD
WITH CONSULTATION WITH HMG, BUT ALL CONCERNED SHOULD AVOID
DOING ANYTHING TO ADD IMPETUS TO VISIT. IF CHATCHAI PRESSES
MATTER, WE SEE NO ALTERNATIVE TO TAKING HIM TO DIEGO GARCIA
UNLESS BRITISH ARE PREPARED TO TAKE ONUS OF OUTRIGHT VETO.
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BECAUSE OF CHATCHAI'S MERCURIAL NATURE HIS VISIT COULD
RESULT IN INADVERTENT MISCHIEF. CONSEQUENTLY, WE THINK IT SHOULD
BE GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO GO AWAY.
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